

First Nations Fisheries Council

December Communiqué



FIRST NATIONS
FISHERIES COUNCIL

First Nations Fisheries Council Annual Assembly

The theme of this year's Fisheries Assembly, presented by the First Nations Fisheries Council, was *Co-Management: Developing a Shared Vision for the Future*. The Assembly, held November 2nd – 4th at Nisga'a Hall in Prince Rupert, was an opportunity for First Nations to engage in direct dialogue with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Over the three-day period a number of constructive developments emerged, including the drafting of a First Nations *Statement of Solidarity* concerning Joint Management of fisheries. Participants at the meeting determined that the term 'Joint Management' was preferable to 'Co-Management', as it better reflected the shared legitimacy and respect of both parties within a Joint Management arrangement. In-keeping with the theme of the Assembly, First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided varying perspectives on potential management frameworks, governance structures, scales for decision-making, activities, and mechanisms. Finally, the First Nations Fisheries Council was able to offer an update and overview of all working groups progress and prospects. The discussions highlighted a number of commonalities, but also illustrated the complexity of integrating First Nations management perspectives with the Department's existing policy framework.

A comprehensive summary of the Assembly proceedings as well as PowerPoint presentations is available here: <http://bit.ly/daA2fy>

Public Perception and Communications Plan

Recently, the First Nations Fisheries Council contracted a firm to conduct a public perception audit that randomly surveyed people throughout British Columbia. The purpose of the survey was to measure public opinion regarding First Nations role in fisheries management within traditional territories and more broadly, to gauge perceptions of the rights to fisheries resources, and to measure knowledge of First Nations rights, responsibilities and actions regarding the maintenance and improvement of fisheries.

The results of the survey indicate that people in British Columbia overwhelmingly recognize that First Nations have rights related to fisheries. The survey also revealed confusion about how fisheries are managed and the role of First Nations in management. It is therefore important that First Nations in British Columbia communicate examples of successful joint management or First Nations management in areas such as stock assessment, allocation, access and management, science and research, habitat protection and management, oceans and marine planning, monitoring and compliance, policy and communications, and consultations with resource users. Communicating positive stories of successful management and self-policing will

help to make people in British Columbia more aware that First Nations are actively engaged in management, and are committed to the responsible use of the fisheries resource.

As part of an ongoing communications initiative by the First Nations Fisheries Council, we are encouraging people to send us their stories about successful First Nations fisheries initiatives that help to protect the resources and improve management. If you have a program that you would like to share please contact our communications coordinator (matthew@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

Incoming Aquaculture Regulations and Licensing Conditions

On February 9th, 2009 the British Columbia Supreme Court ruled that elements of the existing provincial aquaculture management regime are beyond provincial jurisdiction. As a result, the Supreme Court canceled the existing provincial aquaculture-licensing regime and granted the federal government a one-year period to develop a replacement regime. The Court subsequently extended this one-year period to December 18th, 2010. After this date, any existing provincial license will no longer be valid.

In response to this decision the federal government has developed proposed *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act* to replace the provincial regime. The proposed draft regulations were published in *Canada Gazette Part I* on July 10th, 2010 for consultation purposes. The final regulations will be published in the *Canada Gazette II* in December 2010.

In preparation for issuing new federal licenses under the *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations*, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has created draft license templates for three main commercial aquaculture categories (marine finfish, shellfish and freshwater fish). The templates outline the general contents of the licenses Fisheries and Oceans Canada intends to issue on December 18th, 2010. Fisheries and Oceans Canada solicited feedback on the 200-page document in a two-week comment window (October 26th – November 12th).

As many coastal communities expressed concern that the period for input has been inadequate, the First Nations Fisheries Council invited Fisheries and Oceans Canada personnel to participate in a conference call on November 17th, 2010. The call provided an overview of the licensing conditions and facilitated a question and answer period. A summary of this meeting is available on the Aquaculture Correspondence page (<http://bit.ly/cdMfmr>). The Fisheries Council also responded with some general comments about the proposed license conditions, based on feedback received from First Nations at previous meetings.

New Executive Director

The First Nations Fisheries Council has appointed Jordan Point as the new Executive Director. Jordan is from the Musqueam First Nation, and has served 6 terms as a member of the Musqueam Council, and joins the Fisheries Council with an extensive 20 year background in fisheries, having started his career as a Fishery Guardian with Musqueam. Jordan then applied to Fisheries and Oceans Canada and progressed from a Fishery officer to a Detachment Supervisor in Steveston, overseeing the Steveston and Squamish C&P offices. He also worked various

assignments in the Treaty branch, and in the Litigation case management unit, before accepting the position as the Aboriginal Affairs Advisor with the Lower Fraser Area office.

Jordan resigned from Fisheries and Oceans Canada last spring and has been working for Musqueam as the Gateway Coordinator, overseeing a \$10 million dollar agreement between Musqueam and the Province on the Pacific Gateway initiative, prior to accepting this opportunity with the Fisheries Council. The coming months will be a period of overlap and transition as Brenda McCorquodale will be returning to Fisheries and Oceans Canada as her three year Interchange Canada agreement comes to an end. Brenda will remain the first point of contact while Jordan handles administrative activities related to the transition, and Brenda will return to Fisheries and Oceans Canada on February 1st, 2011.

Council Executive

The Fisheries Council welcomes Jeff Thomas as the new council member representing Vancouver Island South, replacing outgoing council member Chief Allan Claxton. Jeff is currently involved with the Aquaculture Working Group as well as the First Nations Island Marine Aquatic Working Group. Chief Hank Adams has also recently been appointed by the Southern and Northern Shuswap to replace Chief Marilyn Camille in one of the mid-Fraser seats.

Joint Working Groups

The First Nations Fisheries Council and Fisheries and Oceans Canada have established four working groups under the *Commitment to Action*, which include Aquaculture, Section 35.1 (Food, Social and Ceremonial), Economic Access and Co-Management (Joint Management). The working groups have developed draft work plans, which were presented as part of the Fisheries Assembly. The draft work plans are available here: <http://bit.ly/daA2fy>

Meeting notes, working group terms of reference, and additional background information is available on the First Nations Fisheries Council website (www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

As many of these documents are internal to First Nations only, a username and password is required to access some information. A confidential login is available to anyone who is a member of a BC First Nation or who works on behalf of a First Nation in the area of fisheries. For more information please contact the Communications Coordinator at matthew@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

Regional Fisheries Organizations Conference Calls

The next bi-weekly Regional Fisheries Organizations conference calls for BC First Nations Fisheries Organizations and technical staff (Tier One – internal to First Nations only) will be held:

Wednesday, December 15th (9:00 am to 10:30 am)

Please contact the First Nations Fisheries Council for dial-in information and agendas, or refer to past meeting summaries on the First Nations Fisheries Council website. Meeting summaries are available to First Nations only; therefore, access is permitted with the use of a username and password. A confidential login is available to anyone who is a member of a BC First Nation or

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Cohen Commission

The public hearing segment of the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of the Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River has now concluded. The Commission has turned its attention to a series of evidentiary hearings, which conclude Thursday, December 16th.

Hearings will be held Monday through Thursday, from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm each day. Hearings are open to the public and will be held at the Federal Court at 701 West Georgia Street, 8th floor.

The hearings will cover a broad spectrum of issues, including the Wild Salmon Policy (November 29th to December 3rd), the Aboriginal World View (December 13th to 15th), Harvest Management, Commercial Fishing, and Aboriginal Fishing (March or April 2011).

For the complete schedule of the evidentiary hearings please visit: www.cohencommission.ca/en/schedule.

For background information relating to the evidence that is being put in front of the Commission please visit: www.cohencommission.ca/en/Backgrounders.php.

Pacific Salmon as a Symbol for British Columbia

The Pacific Salmon Foundation and Fraser Basin Council are inviting the people of British Columbia to express their views on a proposal to designate wild Pacific salmon as an official provincial symbol under the *Provincial Honours and Symbols Act*.

To join the conversation please visit: www.thinksalmon.com

Fish in the News

The First Nations Fisheries Council continues to maintain an up-to-date archive of media reports related to fisheries issues in British Columbia of interest to First Nations. See www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca for the latest information about upcoming meetings, job opportunities, and other fisheries related news.

Contact Us

For more information about the First Nations Fisheries Council, please visit our website at www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca. You can also reach the communications coordinator at matthew@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.